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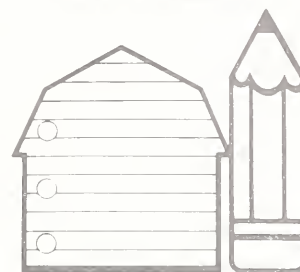
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Ag in the Classroom

Notes

United States
Department of
Agriculture



A bi-monthly newsletter for the Agriculture in the Classroom program. Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to help students understand the important role of agriculture in the United States economy. For information, contact: Shirley Traxler, Director, Room 317-A, Administration Bldg., USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-2200. 202/447-5727

March/April 1990
Vol. 6, No. 1

Think Globally, Act Locally: Earth Day 1990

On April 22, 1990, Americans will join in a worldwide twentieth anniversary celebration of Earth Day. This special event will bring together individuals and groups to share concerns about the health of the planet and work to protect the environment around the globe.

The sponsors of Earth Day 1990 include leaders from government, education, business, agricultural organizations, youth groups, environmental groups, and the arts. Activities across the nation on Earth Day will include

parades, nature walks, concerts, exhibits, and forums to discuss local, national, and global environmental problems.

Earth Day 1990 comes at a time when Americans have gained a new awareness of the importance of protecting the environment. Today, 75 percent of Americans consider themselves environmentalists.

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Soil and Water Stewardship Week

In the week following Earth Day, Americans will have an opportunity to continue their environmental awareness, focusing especially on preserving our soil and water. President Bush has proclaimed the week of April 29 - May 6 as Soil and Water Stewardship Week.

Since 1955, the National Association of Conservation Districts has sponsored Soil and Water Stewardship Week, in cooperation with nearly 3,000 local districts nationwide, as one way to emphasize the importance of good stewardship of basic soil and water resources. Local churches, other organizations, and individuals are also encouraged to take part in activities encouraging responsibility for protecting natural resources.

The 1990 theme for Soil and Water Stewardship Week is "Citizens of All Creation." Educational materials developed around that theme point out individual and community

actions that can protect and preserve soil and water. They include practicing erosion prevention, conserving water, planting a tree, and learning more about worldwide conservation issues such as the need to protect the Amazon rain forest.

The teaching materials also emphasize that stewardship involves a concern for all the earth's resources. "Today's Nebraska farmer may be more dramatically affected by drought or good crops in the Soviet Union or Argentina or Canada, than by the conditions in Idaho or Georgia," the teaching materials point out.

Copies of the materials are available at a cost of 75 cents each plus postage. Contact the National Association of Conservation Districts, P.O. Box 855, League City, Texas, 77574-0855.



From the Director

Dear Readers,

Springtime always seems to bring with it our heightened awareness and fuller appreciation for the beauty and bounty of our earth. Perhaps that is why at this time of year we observe "Earth Day" and "Soil and Water Stewardship Week." It is a perfect time for people in agricultural and environmental circles to talk about our concerns for feeding the world's people while at the same time preserving the land, air, and water for the generations to come. The issues involved are complex and numerous and present many alternatives and consequences to

consider. In this issue of "Notes" you will read about "Project Food, Land and People," a national curriculum that is being developed to address those issues and to help students learn critical thinking and decision making skills. If any of you are interested in contributing to or supporting this project in any way, I urge your participation.

Yours truly,



Shirley Traxler



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

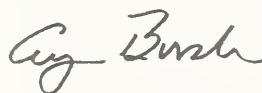
Soil and Water Stewardship Week

April 29 - May 6, 1990

Our Nation has been blessed with a wealth of natural treasures. With seemingly endless fertile fields, countless rivers and streams, forests of towering trees, and an abundance of wildlife, we possess some of the most extraordinary natural resources in the world.

We hold this natural bounty in trust for future generations of Americans. It is not ours to squander and despoil, but ours to use and manage wisely -- not only for our own benefit but also for the benefit of our children and our children's children.

Fortunately, through the advancement of science and technology, we have been able to learn new and more effective ways of preserving our water and land resources. But to ensure the success of conservation, we need more than new technologies -- we need the dedicated efforts of all Americans. Observing Soil and Water Stewardship Week, 1990, will provide a wonderful opportunity to focus on how we can all contribute to this most worthy effort. Together, we can make a difference in preserving our precious heritage.



Earth Day 1990

Continued from page 1

Borrowing from the late René Dubose, the slogan for Earth Day 1990 is "Think globally; act locally. You can make a difference."

As a demonstration of a commitment to environmentalism, the coordinators of Earth Day are asking each participant to plant and care for at least one tree. As many as one billion new seedlings may be planted around the world as a result of this Earth Day initiative.

Earth Day 1990 has also developed educational materials, including a lesson plan and a survey for students in grades K-12. Students and their parents will be encouraged to work together to complete a survey that measures the environmental soundness of their homes, as well as take an inventory of the things their family can do to protect the environment.

Last fall, President Bush noted, "Through millions of individual decisions—simple, everyday, personal choices—we are determining the fate of the Earth." He added, "It's surprisingly easy to move from being part of the problem to being part of the solution."

For more information on Earth Day, contact Earth Day 1990, P.O. Box AA, Stanford University, Palo Alto, California 94309.

There were no issues of *Ag in the Classroom Notes* from Vol. 4, No. 6 through Vol. 5, No. 5. This issue is Vol. 6, No. 1.

Spotlight

California Teacher Reaches Out

A California teacher has used Ag in the Classroom activities with gifted children and with students who are at risk of school failure. His experience is that integrating agriculture into the curriculum works well for any student at any grade level.

Don Davison is a Resource Room teacher at Terrace Middle School in Lakeport, California. He works with students in grades 6-8 who need extra help in language arts, math, science, or reading. "These are students who have not had a lot of success in school," Davison says. "They needed something to get them fired up and feeling excited about learning again. The Ag in the Classroom activities have been ideal."

To integrate agriculture into his language arts lessons, for example, Davison invited guest speakers representing a variety of agricultural careers to visit his classes. Students interviewed the guests, who ranged from migrant farm workers to food processors to local producers of food and fiber, and then wrote papers based on what they had learned.

Davison also arranged with a writer from a local newspaper to have his students cover their Ag in the Classroom activities as a regular monthly feature in the local newspaper. Each month, a student wrote about class activities which have included field trips to local farms and classes as well as a variety of other special events. "When students see their bylines in the newspaper, it helps them develop confidence in their writing," Davison says, adding that the articles were also "great PR" for Ag in the Classroom. He was recently named California's Resource Teacher of the Year, based largely on the innovative work he has done in integrating agriculture into the curriculum.

Davison has also served as a mentor teacher for his school district's gifted and talented program. He says AITC activities work equally well for gifted students. "They have the opportunity to pursue individual interests—the activities really challenge gifted students."

Davison's interest in Ag in the Classroom began when he attended the California Summer Agricultural Institute in 1988. Today, Davison is so committed to the importance of Ag in the

Classroom that he has been active in promoting the program at the county, state, national, and even international level. He has written articles for a variety of educational publications. He distributed AITC materials when he attended the World Conference on Gifted and Talented Children in Sydney, Australia, last year. Davison, who was chosen as the Summer Agricultural Institute graduate of the year by the California Farm Bureau Federation, encourages other teachers to take part in AITC activities. As county coordinator for California's Ambassadors program, he has identified a contact person in each school in Lake County who will disseminate information about Ag in the Classroom to other teachers.

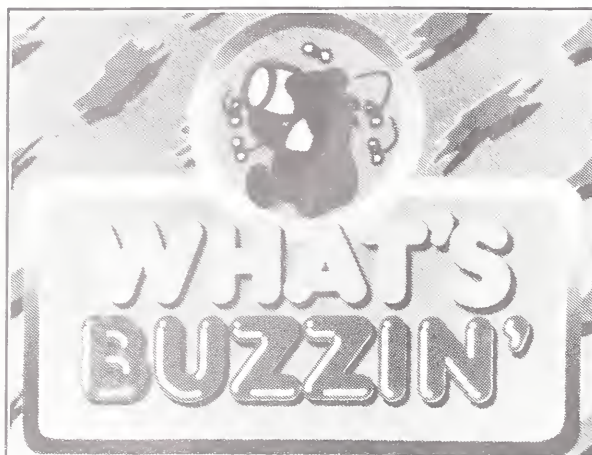
Davison is already hard at work planning a county-wide Ag Day for all students in Lake County's schools next year. And he's looking forward to getting each of the school Ambassadors directly involved with Ag in the Classroom.

Why does he spend so much time promoting Ag in the Classroom? "My students are learning. They've experienced success in school. And best of all," he adds, "I'm having fun."

Don Davison at last year's AITC Conference



Video Helps Kids Learn "What's Buzzin'"



A new video and teaching package produced by the National Honey Board are helping students learn "What's Buzzin'" in the world of honey bees. The ten-minute videotape, designed for students in grades 4-6, features child reporters who set out to learn about honeybees for their newscast—"What's Buzzin'."

The video explains pollination, the roles of bees in the hive, and how bees make honey. It also explores the tasks of bees in the hive—from gathering nectar to air-conditioning.

The video is supplemented with a teacher's guide and student worksheets. In the lessons, students learn more about how bees make honey, of course. But they also learn about the importance of communication and cooperation, as bees work together toward their common goal. The teacher's

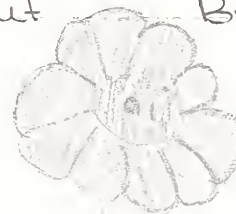
"What's Buzzin'" reporters investigate pollination, honeybees and honey in the National Honey Board's 10-minute videotape



guide also suggests additional activities for follow up. A bright poster completes the teaching package.

Each state AITC office has received a complimentary copy of the video and the teaching materials. The National Honey Board is also making a complete teaching kit available for purchase. Cost of a package that includes the video, teacher's guide, student worksheets, and a color poster is \$15. Contact Mary Humann at the National Honey Board, 421 21st Avenue, #203, Longmont, Colorado 80501.

What I Learned
About Bees



That bees rub ther legs
To get poulin

USDA Researches Bar-Code Bees

The National Honey Board materials teach students how to tell the difference between bees and wasps. But how can scientists keep track of individual bees?

Until now, says USDA researcher Stephen L. Buchmann, the task was "almost impossible" because bees all look alike. As a result, he says, researchers "couldn't easily monitor bees leaving and returning to their hives."

After a visit to a local supermarket, Buchman got the idea of using bar codes to monitor individual bees.



Teachers who have tried to integrate agricultural activities into their regular curriculum frequently discover that they cannot find the kind of high-quality materials they want to use with their students. Over the next several months, a series of writing conferences will bring together teachers and other experts to develop the activities teachers need.

The conferences are being sponsored by Food, Land and People, a project designed to create a national curriculum focusing on the interconnection of people, agriculture and natural resources. Held at locations across the U.S., conferences will bring together teachers and other resource people to develop lessons and activities that will integrate the teaching of agriculture into curricular areas for students in grades K-12.

"The best materials are teacher-generated," says Fran Trujillo, director of Food, Land and People. But she notes that it is often difficult to bring teachers together for any sustained curriculum development work. Developing curricular materials is expensive and time-consuming.

"By holding the conferences in locations across the country, we hope to encourage the broadest possible participation," Trujillo says. "Our goal is to create materials that can be used nationwide." The following dates and locations have been selected:

Sacramento, California—May 17-20.

Des Moines, Iowa—June 5-8.

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania—June 24-27

Greenville, South Carolina—July 26-29

Texas—Date and site to be announced

Estes Park, Colorado—October 18-21

Materials developed during the writing conferences will be pilot tested by teacher volunteers, evaluated by educators, and then revised before they are included in the final Food, Land and People curriculum.

The materials should be ready for distribution during the 1992-93 school year. Because Trujillo says the goal of Food, Land, and People is to create a "user-friendly"

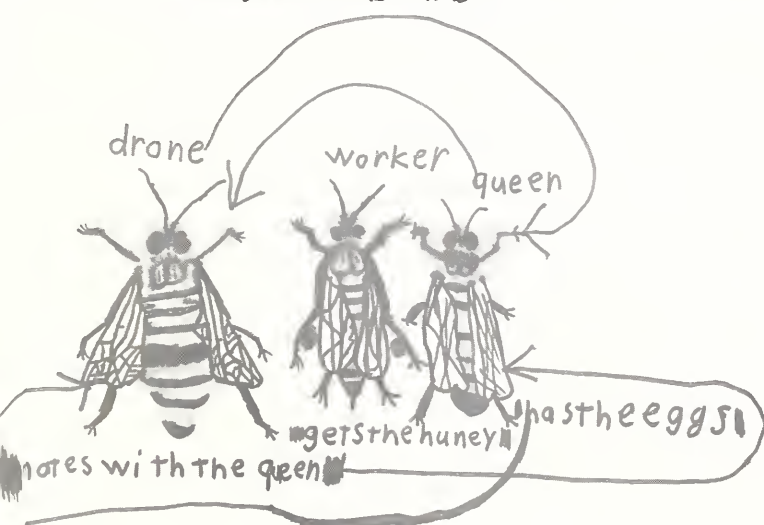
curriculum, teacher inservice will be an integral part of the nationwide distribution of the curriculum. "We want to help teachers who have had little or no exposure to agriculture feel they can be successful with these materials," she says.

Teachers who want to participate in the writing conferences should contact Trujillo. "Include a brief statement of your interest in Ag in the Classroom, as well as your experience in developing materials for classroom use." For more information on the conferences, contact Fran Trujillo, Box 157, Peyton, Colorado 80831.



Food, Land & People

What I Learned About Bees



Today, scientists studying bees glue bar strips to a bee's tiny hairs. An electronic bar-code reader at the beehive records each bee's exit and entrance and feeds data to a computer for analysis.

Buchman says the research could yield new clues to selecting healthier, highly productive bees as plant pollinators in the future. The new technology was selected by Popular Science magazine as one of the 100 innovations that are the "best of what's new in 1989."

ARS Challenges Future Scientists

"We're facing a real shortage of scientists and engineers in the 21st century," says John R. DeLoach, a research leader at an ARS research laboratory in College Station, Texas. DeLoach is not alone in expressing his concern about where the next generation of agricultural scientists and engineers will come from.

Today, a number of ARS programs are designed to promote an interest in agricultural careers. Programs range from apprenticeships to teacher fellowships to school visits to part-time jobs during the school year. Many of the programs make a special effort to attract women and minorities to agricultural careers. By the year 2000, more than half the nation's

work force will be composed of women and minorities. Here are some examples of the kinds of opportunities available to future scientists:

Through the Research Apprenticeship program, some 200 high school students work with ARS scientists for eight weeks during the summer as biological, physical, or engineering aides. Tamura Banwort, a high school student who took part in last summer's program, says, "Most people never get this kind of opportunity. In eight weeks, I learned what it's like to work with scientists in a laboratory."

Some employment opportunities do not require the work to be related to a student's academic major. The Stay-in-School Program, the College Work-Study Program, and some Cooperative Education programs have as their first objective supplementing a student's education—either academically or financially.

Nonetheless, these programs often attract future scientists. Stanley Perkins, a student at Xavier University, has changed his career plans as a result of his participation in a Cooperative Education program with ARS. "I started off as a pharmacy major and switched to chemistry," says Perkins. "After being in the lab for a while, I realized this switch was the right one. I'd like to get a Ph.D. in analytical chemistry to further my career in the agency."

Teachers are included in some programs. The ARS Teachers' Research Fellowship Program hires high school and junior high school science and math teachers for summer jobs as lab technicians. The goal of the program is that teachers will convey some of the excitement of real-life research to their students the next year.

Apparently, it works. Teacher Jim Lloyd says, "When I talk to students about science projects now, I have a feel for laboratory equipment that I didn't have before."

A recent issue of *Agricultural Research*, a monthly magazine published by the Agricultural Research Service, spotlights many of the programs ARS sponsors to create interest in agricultural careers. Single copies of the December 1989 issue are available free by writing to the Editor, Information Staff, Room 316, Building 005, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center-West, Beltsville, Maryland, 20705.

Biological technician Howard Rhodes takes a blood sample while High School Research Apprentices Emily Parker (standing) and Angela Turner assist



Agricultural Research Service, USDA—Lowell Georgia

New Video Spotlights AG Careers

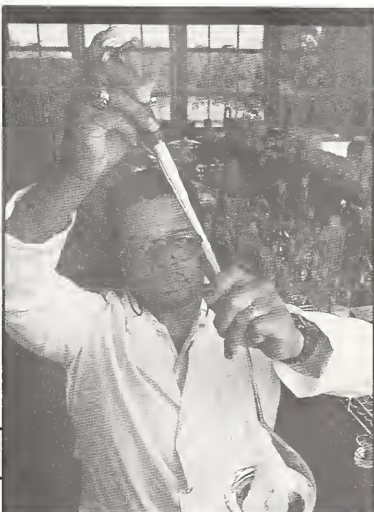
Today, some agricultural businesses are faced with severe personnel shortages. At the same time, students may be discouraged from seeking ag careers because of a lack of information about the opportunities available.

John Deere and the National FFA have produced a video program designed to attract young people to agricultural careers. The informative 14-minute video features interviews with seven young agricultural professionals, ranging from a production farmer to a biotechnologist. They all emphasize that agriculture offers promising career choices for bright ambitious students.

John Deere is distributing complimentary copies of the film throughout the U.S. to help improve the image of agriculture. Agricultural educators who receive the popular "John Deere Day Highlights" video series will automatically receive a free copy of "Agriculture's New Professionals."

Copies of the video have been distributed to offices of 4-H, the National FFA, and a variety of other agriculture education organizations. Copies are also available for \$10.00, plus \$3.00 shipping and handling, from Deere & Co. Distribution Service Center, 1400 13th Street, East Moline, Illinois 61244.

Part of Stanley Perkins' college days were spent at ARS under a cooperative education agreement with Xavier University



Jack Dykinga

Earth Day activities this year are promoting the importance of planting trees. A two-year-old program sponsored by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) has given fifth grade students the opportunity to learn about trees ... and to plant and nurture trees of their own.

The "Plant a Tree for Life" materials focus on the importance of trees to all living things. In addition, the materials emphasize the importance of developing a personal commitment to preserving and enhancing the environment through planting and nurturing trees.

"Plant a Tree for Life" is organized around five separate yet integrated lessons that take the students from awareness to action. Lesson I, "What's A Tree To Me?" helps students learn more about the importance of trees to people and the environment. Students learn about the

products that come from trees—everything from adhesives and aircraft parts to zippers and zithers. Lesson II, "Living in a 'Hot House,'" helps students learn about global warming and the greenhouse effect. The materials teach students that planting trees can help reduce energy costs, absorb CO₂ and help reduce global warming.

As a culminating activity, each student receives a pine seedling to plant. Some schools send the pine seedlings home for students and their families to plant. In other schools, seedlings are planted on the school grounds. In still other cases, schools and businesses or other community organizations cooperate to plant the seedlings in parks, at hospitals and nursing homes, or in other locations throughout the community.

FDACS distributes the lesson plans to teachers throughout the state and provides seedlings to all students participating in the program. This year, more than 70,000 students in 841 schools and 2,489 classrooms will have the opportunity to plant a tree for life.

For more information on the Plant a Tree for Life curriculum, contact Ray Mason, FDACS, Division of Forestry, 3125 Conner Blvd., Tallahassee, Florida 32399.



Ag in the Classroom — State Contacts

The individuals listed here are key reference persons in each state. If you have any questions, want to make reports, or need more information about your state's Ag in the Classroom program, contact the following:

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